

yellow. Tongue about '8 long, shaped like a broad arrow, rounded and split at tip, its back horny, as also edge of front half, which is thin and turned up; central surface velvety and thick; back angles edged and dotted with horny papillæ. Sternum of female rather longer than that of male, shaped much like that of the Harfang or Snowy Owl (Cuv. An. King. Lond. 1849, p. 175).

This species is more nearly related to *Ketupa flavipes* (Hodgs.) than to the other two known species, both in the markings of its upper plumage, and in the plumed state of its shanks; but it differs from all in its bill and claws being black instead of yellowish. The pair were procured on a branch of this river, about fifty miles distant to the south-west, where the country is mountainous, with dark woody ravines, and bush-covered rocks jut out into the water. Freshwater crabs and small fish abound; and I presume it is after these they wade with their naked feet and partially exposed legs. But the winter is at hand, and the cold has driven the crabs into hibernation; it is, then, on fish that they now chiefly subsist, as the maw of the male proves. But how can they procure them? Their rough and aculeate soles will hold fish well enough, when they have got them between their claws; but I do not think so clumsy a foot could catch a darting minnow. The head must be immersed for such a purpose, and during his search for food the bird must get very wet. Our winter evenings are foggy and raw, and Owls' feathers are difficult to dry. Perhaps he contents himself with other food when crabs are in bed for the winter, and the time is not propitious for fishing!

Ningpo, November 28th, 1872.

XVII.—*Ornithological Notes from the Argentine Republic.*

By WILLIAM BLACKSTONE LEE, B.A.

FROM February till July 1871 I was staying at an "estancia" on the frontier of the Indian territory, about eleven leagues from Frayle Muerto and four or five from the small camp-village of Saladillo. On landing at Buenos Ayres I found it

would be very inconvenient to get to my destination in Entre Rios on account of the civil war then going on, and in the Hotel de la Paix I met two gentlemen who told me they were going up country to their "estancia" near Frayle Muerto, and most kindly asked me to accompany them. The journey is not very interesting; the river from Buenos Ayres to Rosario is generally clothed on both sides with a jungle of long grass and thick scrubby trees, the home of quantities of large Storks and Herons and wildfowl of several kinds. Now and then a carpincho appeared on the banks or in the water; but this was the only beast to be seen; and altogether the journey is certainly monotonous. From Rosario the railway runs to Cordova; and Frayle Muerto is about halfway. The country is of course perfectly flat; and the only things to be seen in the way of wild animals are a few deer and Ostriches. On the banks of the river at Frayle Muerto there is some rather pretty wood; but this disappears directly you leave the banks, and out towards my friends' "estancia" the only trees are occasional small patches of scrubby brushwood scattered often at distances of several leagues from each other over the endless flat plains. These scrubby trees are chiefly algarroba and quebracho, the former being the best firewood I ever saw; but so little wood is there that all our firewood had to be brought from Frayle Muerto, about thirty-five miles distance. A river runs just below the "estancia;" but there is no wood along its banks, only a strip of long grass on each side, some two or three hundred yards wide, in which the pumas take refuge after supping on the sheep of the "estancia." Occasionally, but much more rarely, a jaguar made his appearance. One was killed the Sunday before I got there, and one two or three years before. They were said to be plentiful some twenty or thirty leagues further along the river. We used to ride out with as many dogs as we could collect, and beat along the banks for these animals; but I never saw a jaguar, and only shot one puma. Deer and Ostriches were plentiful, but shy. During the greater part of my stay here the river was almost dry; but we had a little rain at last; and then there were plenty of Ducks and Blue-winged Teals, and not unfrequently Geese and Swans—

the former white, with black tips to the wings—the latter white, with black necks. A small reddish Grebe was also common. All over the camp the “small Partridge” was very abundant; and in the long grass by the river there were always some “big Partridge.” These two birds are the only ones in the country that remind one of game, and are not bad shooting, but very dry and tasteless. The larger bird is about the size of a hen Pheasant, and rises very like one; the small is in size about halfway between a Partridge and a Quail*. Over the grass by the river there were always Harriers (*Circus cinereus*) beating along with Eagles and Chimangos. These latter and the Caranchos were of course always to be seen wherever there was a carcass. On the whole the variety of birds here was small, as one would expect from the utter absence of wood. Besides Geese, Swans, Ducks, and Partridges, I shot the following birds, which have been identified for me by Messrs. Selater and Salvin from the skins which I brought home:—

1. GERANOÆTUS MELANOLEUCUS.

A bird which I thought might be the female of this species came and sat on the chimney one night, where I shot it. It was just the same size, and the cere and legs the same colour, but the plumage dark brown, with barred markings. The natives, however, assured me that they had seen both parent birds at a nest in the same blue plumage; so perhaps this was a young bird.

2. CIRCUS CINEREUS.

Very common, a most graceful bird; the brilliant yellow of the eyes and legs is very striking.

+ 3. HYPOTRIORCHIS FEMORALIS.

Not uncommon.

4. TINNUNCULUS SPARVERIUS.

Very common.

5. PHOLEOPTYNX CUNICULARIA.

To be seen everywhere on the plains.

* [No doubt Tinamous—the larger *Rhynchotis rufescens*, the smaller *Nothura maculosa*.—ED.]

6. STURNELLA DEFILIPPII.

Not so common, and generally in larger flocks.

7. PSEUDOLEISTES VIRESCENS.

Common in small flocks.

Besides these I observed a bird something like a Golden Plover in shape and size, but with plumage more like a Sandpiper, called by the natives "Chorlito." Two kinds of Dove:—one like a very small Turtle Dove, roosting in the scrubby bush; the other a blue Pigeon with small white spots, about the size of a Dovecote Pigeon, which only appeared now and then, in flocks. I also noticed a Woodpecker (*Colaptes agricola*) at a small wood about six miles from Frayle Muerto, and another (*Chrysophilus cristatus*) close to Frayle Muerto—at the former place also the Scissor-bird, Widow bird, and a little bird smaller than a Robin, with a most brilliant red head and breast, called by the natives "Sangre pura." I forgot to mention among the river-birds a roseate-coloured Spoonbill, and a long-legged black-and-white Plover.

From July 1871 to February 1872 I was in the province of Entre Rios, on the banks of the Gato, about seven or eight leagues north-west of Gualeguaychu. The river here has a belt of wood on each side; and there are also considerable clumps of trees scattered here and there over the campo. The surface of the ground is much more undulating; and this, with the much greater extent of woods, makes the country more interesting than the country about Cordova. Deer are very scarce, and Ostriches not very common; Carpinchos very plentiful along the river; there are no pumas or jaguars. One of these latter, however, was lassoed during my stay, at the time of a flood, about ten or twelve leagues off. The floods come down very suddenly; and any beast that has taken up his quarters in the thick wood, which in the turns of the river is often almost impenetrable, is often forced out by the water into the open plains.

In the woods on the banks of the Gato I shot specimens of

the following species, which have been likewise identified by Mr. Selater and Mr. Salvin.

1. PROGNE CHALYBEA.

This Swallow is very common.

2. CYANOCORAX PILEATUS.

This bird is common in the woods ; and one generally knows its whereabouts by its noise. It is not easy to procure good specimens, as the feathers are fine and loose, and the bright yellow breast and belly show the smallest stain of blood.

3. TYRANNUS MELANCHOLICUS.

Common. The species, however, most frequently met with is a larger bird with a brown back, yellow breast, and a black stripe through the eye, about as large as a Thrush ; it may generally be seen near water, sitting on an overhanging bough and uttering at intervals a loud shrill cry.

4. DRYMORNIS BRIDGESI*.

This species is very common. It is said by the natives to suck the eggs of poultry ; but I rather doubt this statement.

+ 5. CERYLE TORQUATA.

This Kingfisher is not very often met with. Its loud note *kek-kek-kek* is sure to catch the ear if one happens to fly past, so that it is not likely to escape observation ; but I have not seen many specimens.

6. CERYLE AMERICANA.

I do not think this species is rare ; but at the same time I saw very few specimens, not more than three or four.

+ 7. CERYLE AMAZONA.

This species is very common.

8. CAMPEPHILUS BOLÆI (Wagl.).

This species is comparatively rare. It taps on the trees

* [*Nasica bridgesi*, Eyton, Contr. Orn. 1849, p. 130, pl. 38: *Drymornis bridgesi*, Eyt. l. c. 1852, p. 23 = *Nasica gracilirostris*, Burm. La Plata-Reise, ii. p. 446. Of this bird we have also received skins from Mendoza (Weiss-haupt). These are marked as being *Dendrocolaptes brunneiceps* of the Mus. of Santiago.—P. L. S. & O. S.]

much louder than any other Woodpecker, and can be heard a long way off. I found on dissection that it is the female which has the head entirely red.

9. *CHRYSOPTILUS CRISTATUS*.

One of the commonest birds to be met with in the woods near Gualeguayehu.

10. *PICUS CACTORUM*.

This is a very pretty and a very common little bird. It and *C. cristatus* are more numerous than *C. agricola*; but all three species are frequently to be met with, while *C. boiei* is always scarce. The "capitan" (head man) of one of my friends, on being shown *C. boiei*, recognized the bird at once as having been seen by him on one occasion only, a year or two previously, when he was struck by the black body and brilliant red crest; but he has never again met with it.

11. *COLAPTES AGRICOLA*.

This Woodpecker is quite common, and is generally seen in open ground. It is often found hopping about over the grass in little parties of three or four.

12. *HYDROPSALIS TORQUATA*.

This bird may often be seen in the woods on summer evenings; but it is difficult to procure a good specimen, as one must get near to distinguish the species, and then the shot often spoil the beautiful tail-feathers.

13. *NYCTIDROMUS ALBICOLLIS*.

14. *PODAGER NACUNDA*.

Neither of these is uncommon; and they may be found in much the same localities as *Hydropsalis torquata*. There is a larger kind of Night-jar which sometimes gets up in flocks off the camp when one is riding in the daytime; it has a large white patch on the wings.

15. *BOLBORHYNCHUS MONACHUS*.

One of the commonest birds in the country. I noticed three kinds of Parrots during my stay, viz. this species, a smaller variety, of a brighter green colour, and a rather larger bird, with an orange and red patch on the breast. The

latter I often met with in the province of Cordova, but am not aware of having seen it in Entre Rios.

+ 16. *ROSTRAMUS SOCIABILIS*.

So far as I know, I only procured one specimen of this species. It flew overhead by itself as we were lying on the grass. The species appeared to be unknown to every one who saw it; but this evidence is not worth much, as hardly any one in the country took any interest in natural history. I believe, however, from my own observation, that this and *Geranospiza cærulescens* are very rare.

The *Geranospiza* is such a remarkable-looking bird that even a native would have noticed it.

17. *ACCIPITER ERYTHROCNEMIS*.

One specimen of this bird was shot by my companion. I am not aware of having seen any others, but think it would be a very likely bird to escape observation.

+ 18. *GERANOSPIZA CÆRULESCENS*.

Of this bird I never saw but one specimen, which I shot; and on showing it to one or two natives, they said they had never seen one like it; nor had my friend, who had been in the habit of shooting for several years in the country. The crop was full of bits of the unfledged young of some bird; and as there were nests of Parrots and Caranchos near, I have no doubt they supplied the victims. The slate-coloured plumage, orange-red legs, bright yellow eyes, and long brightly coloured tail make this a very handsome bird.

19. *TINNUNCULUS SPARVERIUS*.

This is another most beautiful little Falcon, and one of the commonest birds in the country.

+ 20. *HYPOTRIORCHIS FEMORALIS*.

A beautiful and most graceful Falcon, reminding one strongly both of the Peregrine and the Hobby, especially the latter, though its wings are not quite so long as those of the Hobby. This bird is not uncommon, and is oftener seen at some distance from the woods than any other Hawk I have mentioned.

21. *ASTURINA PUCHERANI**.

In a walk through the woods one was tolerably sure to see two or three specimens of this bird. It has a very heavy flapping flight, and may be recognized by this peculiarity, and by the very rounded shape of its wings. It is nearly always to be seen perched on the very top of a tree, its blackish head contrasting very distinctly with its light-coloured breast. The very pale amber-colour of the eyes is unlike that of any other Hawk that I know. I once found a small snake in the crop, and on another occasion some whitish stuff which stank most abominably.

†22. *BUTEO PTEROCLES*.

This species appears in immense flocks, remaining for a few days, and then disappearing entirely for weeks. I have seen the sky quite full of these birds; and on one occasion, having shot several, I found their crops full of grasshoppers.

†23. *URUBITINGA MERIDIONALIS*.

This bird is not at all rare. It is readily known by the red plumage and the great breadth of the wings.

24. *GERANOÆTUS MELANOLEUCUS*.

This bird is very common wherever I have been in the Argentine Republic and in the Banda Oriental. It may nearly always be seen soaring over the campo. It will feed on any dead carcass; and I have also found its crop full of grasshoppers. Why it should be called a "Sea-Eagle" I cannot imagine.

25. *HARPYHALIAÆTUS CORONATUS*.

There were generally one or two of these about the country; but I seldom saw more of them together. The first I saw killed had been feeding on some dead sheep, and was shot by a friend of mine. It was a female bird and very savage. We had to get a heavy log, and, having knocked the bird over backwards, put the log across her breast and pressed it down on each end. Her strength of grip was very great. The wounded bird showed great courage, with crest erect, striking at every thing near her.

* *Scl. et Salv. Ex. Orn.* p. 177, pl. lxxxix.

26. *BUBO VIRGINIANUS*.

This large bird is not uncommon. I shot two specimens and saw one or two others; and it was well known.

27. *OTUS BRACHYOTUS*.

I only got one specimen of the Short-eared Owl, and am not aware of having seen any others; but I do not fancy that it is rare.

+ 28. *SCOPS BRASILIANUS*.

I shot one of this species, and saw no others; but it is of course an unlikely bird to be met with, not only from its being an Owl, but from its small size.

29. *PHOLEOPTYNX CUNICULARIA*.

This bird may be seen all over the campo. It seems always to frequent the biscacho holes in the Argentine Republic.

30. *ARDEA SIBILATRIX*.

This species is decidedly scarce. I only had a chance of getting two specimens, male and female, both of which I was fortunate enough to secure.

+ 31. *BUTORIDES CYANURUS*.

I only procured one or two specimens of this bird, and believe it to be scarce.

32. *PARRA JACANA*.

I shot this bird on a large swampy laguna some four leagues from where I was living, and it may be common in such places; but I never met with it on the lagunas near home, which were much smaller.

+ 33. *ERISMATURA DOMINICA*.

I got one specimen of this bird, and am not aware of having seen any others. The long stiff tail-feathers seemed to me peculiar. It is a very expert diver; and I watched it in a deep part of the river diving and remaining under water a long time on each occasion.

The above notes only apply to the banks of the Gato, seven or eight leagues from Gualeguaychú; and such birds as *Ardea sibilatrix* or *Butorides cyanurus* may very likely be commoner

along the larger rivers, the Gato being a good deal smaller than the river one crosses to get from it to the town.

In addition to the three Woodpeckers I have mentioned, I also saw on two occasions another species, apparently rather smaller than *Chrysoptilus cristatus*, but marked with large patches of black and white. I also noticed very large Storks with white breasts and black wings, a bluish grey Heron, a bird the natives call Jacá, about the size of a Turkey, with two sharp spurs on each wing; and occasionally I think I saw in Cordova a small black Vulture, which I afterwards saw often in the Banda Oriental, and which the natives call "Cuervo." Of course Caranchos, Chimangos, and Teroterros or Spur-winged Plover swarmed everywhere. The egg of the latter is very like that of the Pewit.

Snipes I don't think I ever saw in Cordova; but I shot two or three in Entre Rios, and my companion said he once had a decent morning's shooting at them. The Widow bird and little "Sangre Pura" were very common about the Gato, and of course a great variety of other small birds; but I only attempted to collect the Hawks, Owls, Woodpeckers, and Kingfishers; and I think I must have got nearly all there were to be found in that part.

XVIII.—*Descriptions of six new Species of West-African Birds.* By Captain G. E. SHELLEY.

1. *SCOPS ICTERORHYNCHUS*, sp. nov.

Above tawny-brown, finely pencilled with dark brown; a few of the feathers of the forehead are nearly white, with black shafts; those of the crown are palest towards their centres, especially the ones forming the ear-tufts; and all are triangularly barred with narrow wavy streaks of dark brown; the feathers of the face above the eyes are buff, their ends narrowly edged with dark brown; those in front of the eyes have a rather more rufous tinge; and those on the cheeks and ear-coverts are similar in colour to the crown, but of a looser texture; the frill of feathers round the face, towards the chin, is buff, with black ends fading into brown at their extremities.